

May 17, 2010

To: Andrew Crabtree  
cc: Envision San Jose 2040 Task Force  
From: Brian Darrow  
Subject: Recommended Additions to Healthcare Goals, Policies and Actions

Dear Mr. Crabtree and Envision San Jose Task Force members,

In recent decades, Silicon Valley has established itself not only as a hub for private sector innovation, but also as a center for innovation in the public sector. In particular in the area of healthcare, San Jose and Santa Clara County have been national leaders in designing creative solutions to problems (from the Children's Health Initiative to the Valley Care program). So far with this General Plan update, San Jose is building on its tradition of local healthcare leadership and innovation by actively planning for the health and wellness of its residents through its land use vision. I want to commend planning staff and the task force for its substantial efforts in this area.

Staff's proposed Goals and Policies for Healthcare are another step in the right direction in planning for the health of the community. The health access challenges San Jose faces and will face in the future are substantial. Recent years have seen the decline in access to medical facilities for many San Jose residents. The closure of San Jose Medical Center (SJMC) and the reduction in the number of hospitals providing non-emergency care to Medi-Cal patients have left downtown and low-income community members with fewer options for obtaining health care services, particularly hospital services. These deficiencies have also put an added strain on other hospitals and the safety net system, particularly Valley Medical Center which saw an 41% increase in Medi-Cal patients coming from downtown San Jose in the two years after SJMC closed, and a 134% increase in hours of ambulance diversion (an indicator of emergency room crowding) in the four years after. Furthermore, between now and 2040 San Jose's over 65 population is expected to triple in size, growing from 10% of the population to 21%. Meeting the healthcare needs of these seniors and the entire San Jose community in the coming decades will require thoughtful, proactive planning for healthcare infrastructure. With this in mind, below are a few suggested additions to the Healthcare Goals and Policies, including some implementation actions.

Policies:

- Policy HC-1.5:** Work with the Valley Transportation Authority to ensure availability of affordable transit options to health facilities. (Add to Policy HC-1.5)
- Policy HC-1.11:** Strive to ensure an operating emergency room is within \_\_\_\_ miles of every resident and a primary care facility is within \_\_\_\_ miles of every resident.
- Policy HC-1.12:** Provide sufficient land for facilities to accommodate future health needs of seniors, including nursing home care, assisted living, and continuing care retirement communities.

Actions:

- Action HC-1.13:** Regularly review health needs analyses done by the county, state and others to identify existing or projected deficiencies in health services including estimated demand for primary, specialty and emergency care.

**Action HC-1.14:** Design an economic development strategy for attracting hospitals and other health care facilities to be implemented when a significant need for a medical facility has been established. Identify and pursue possible sites for such new facilities in coordination with the county and other health providers.

**Action HC-1.15:** Encourage all major land-use planning efforts (including future general plan updates, specific plans and village plans over 5,000 housing units) as part of the planning process to analyze medical service needs in the project area and propose strategies to address these needs.